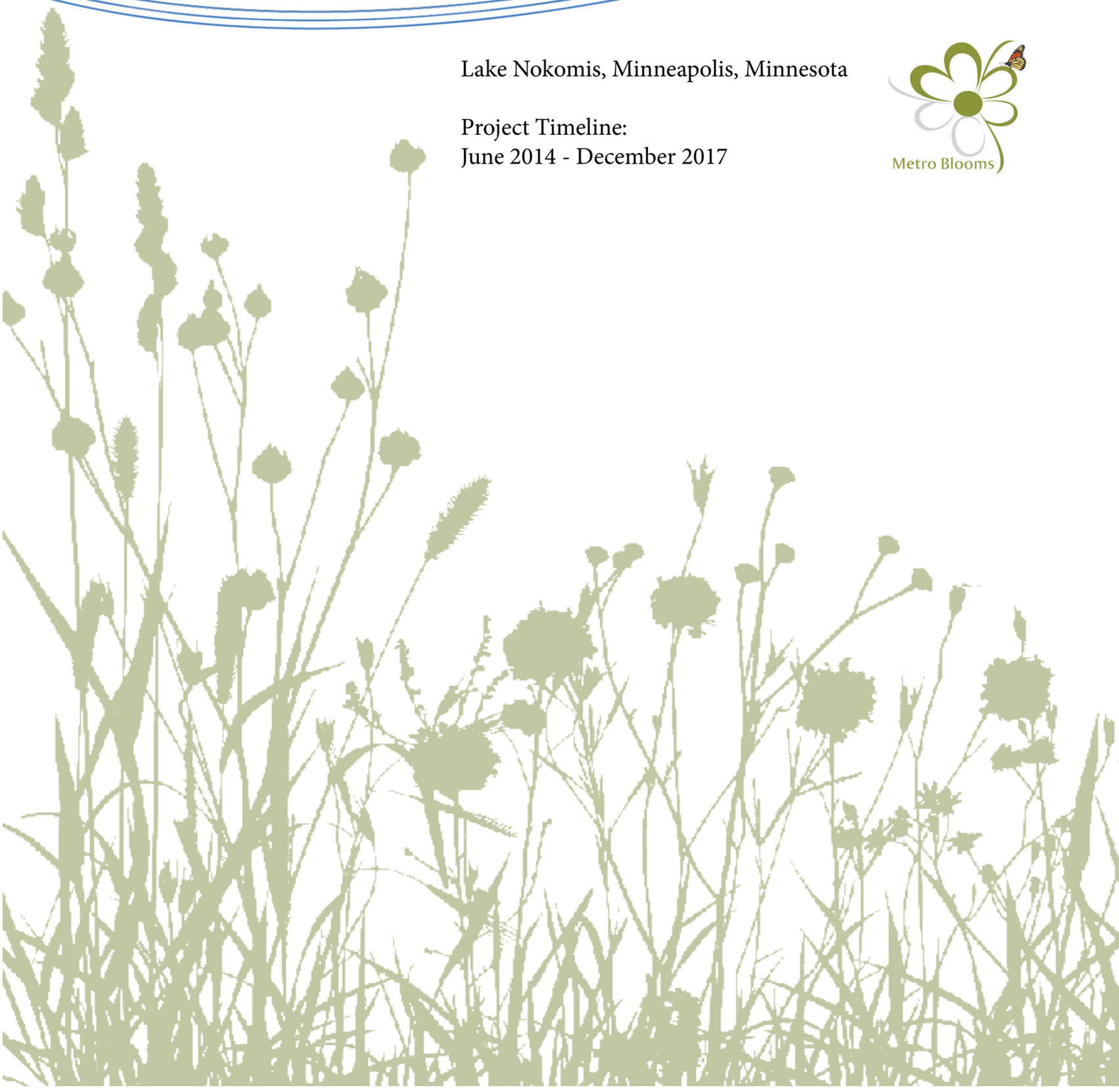
Blooming Alleys for Clean Water

Addressing Impaired Waters through Citizen Engagement

Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Project Timeline:
June 2014 - December 2017

Metro Blooms



"Any future work I do on my property will take the runoff situation into account. I will also be talking to my neighbor about the drainage off

Metro Blooms worked with neighbors in the Lake Nokomis Subwatershed to install stormwater management practices on private property within the "alleyshed" - the area draining to the alley - to transform the ecology and look of the alleyway. Project goals include:

- Water quality improvement in Lake Nokomis
- Creation of connected pollinator corridors from Minnehaha Creek to Lake Nokomis
- Walkable communities

by the numbers

13 blocks
113 households

Installed
105 raingardens
71 native plantings
85 permeable pavement systems

Annually Capture (modeled in WinSLAMM)

18 pounds Total Phosphorus
4,650 pounds Total Suspended Solids
3,000,000 gallons runoff

why?

Lake Nokomis was targeted due to its listing on the state impaired waters list and urban residential watershed. The project was developed in response to a social science survey and analysis of residential drainage patterns. Results demonstrated high water quality knowledge, desire for a neighborhood installation project, and that the majority of impervious surfaces run off to backyards and alleyways. Projects were focused in the eastern portion of the watershed as runoff from this area does not drain to a treatment pond prior to reaching the lake.

how?

This project utilized neighbor to neighbor engagement to recruit a minimum of 30% of properties on participating blocks. Neighbors were invited to an Alley Party + design charrette to learn about the project and connect with neighbors. Follow-up included technical and financial assistance to install and maintain stormwater management practices including raingardens, native plantings, runoff conveyance, and permeable pavement.

methods

Grassroots Leadership

Alley Captains were recruited along targeted blocks to engage their neighbors by inviting them to an Alley Party, hosted in their yard. The parties were an opportunity to share project information and for neighbors to energize around a common goal. Neighbors were encouraged to invite other neighbors to participate. Each year we worked with Alley Captains and participants to host biking and walking tours of completed projects. After the first year, neighbor to neighbor engagement was propelling the project forward.

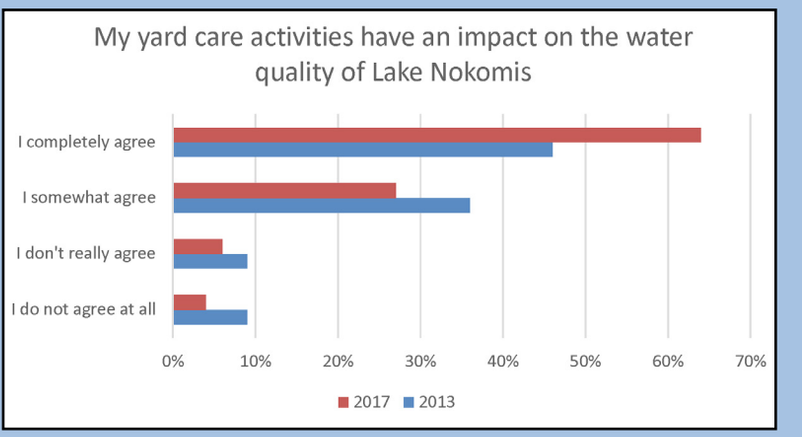
age off his garage." - Blooming Alley Participant

Installation

This project successfully leveraged partnerships with over 25 government, community, and private partners to get water quality projects in the ground through a cost share between residents and local government agencies. Installation oversight included training for Blue Thumb contractors, Conservation Corps of Minnesota crews, Master Water Stewards, neighborhood and corporate volunteers, and youth in outdoor jobs programs.

results

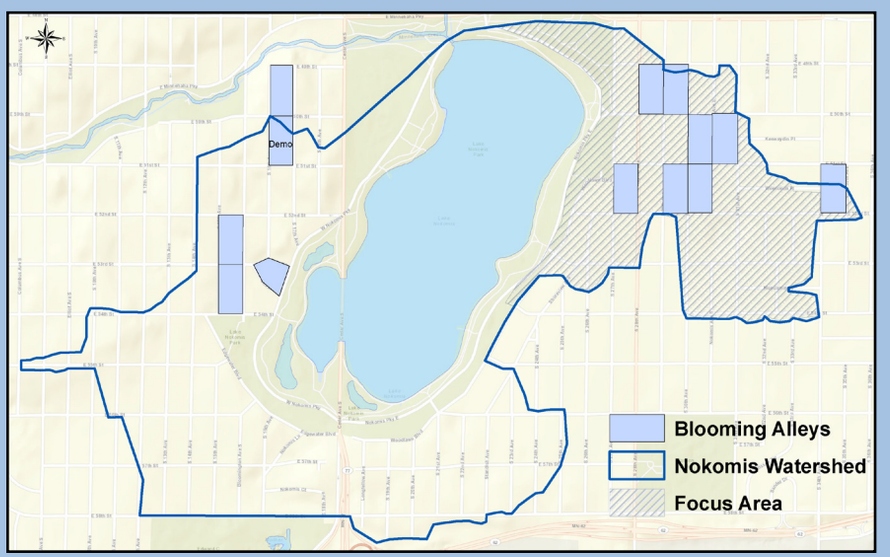
A KAP survey was completed before (2013) and after (2017) project implementation to measure changes in attitude, behavior, and knowledge within the Nokomis Watershed. Residents in the watershed already had, and maintained, high knowledge about water quality and their lake. The largest improvements were in attitude and behavior, regarding residents' concern for the Lake, their impact on water quality, and use of water-friendly landscaping practices.



Education and change in social norms and behavior reached far beyond immediate project participants. Within 1-2 years, 38% of project participants had told more than 10 people about their Blooming Alley project and 1-2 additional neighbors who didn't participate in the project had installed a stormwater management practice.

Ecological impact of 261 completed projects includes:

- Prevention of roughly 7,500 pounds of algae from forming annually
- Capture of enough sediment to fill 5 pick-up truck beds each year
- Enough runoff capture annually to cover an acre with 9 feet of water
- 15,000 square feet of urban pollinator habitat




Permeable pavement and raingarden along Blooming Alley

Financial Support Provided By:

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Minneapolis City of Lakes

Hennepin

BlueCross BlueShield Minnesota | Center for Prevention

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

Metro Blooms' mission is to promote and celebrate gardening, to beautify our communities, and help heal and protect our environment.

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